

(19)



(11)

EP 2 037 543 A1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION

(43) Date of publication:
18.03.2009 Bulletin 2009/12

(51) Int Cl.:
H01R 13/639^(2006.01) H01R 13/627^(2006.01)

(21) Application number: **08012246.8**

(22) Date of filing: **07.07.2008**

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MT NL NO PL PT RO SE SI SK TR
Designated Extension States:
AL BA MK RS

(71) Applicant: **Tyco Electronics AMP K.K. Kawasaki, Kanagawa 213-8535 (JP)**

(72) Inventor: **Sami, Toshiyuki Kawasaki Kanagawa 213-8535 (JP)**

(30) Priority: **27.07.2007 JP 2007196466**

(74) Representative: **Klunker . Schmitt-Nilson . Hirsch Destouchesstrasse 68 80796 München (DE)**

(54) **Electrical connector and connector assembly**

(57) An electric connector has a housing with a front end portion that is inserted in a hood formed on an engaging portion of a mating connector; a tubular member that surrounds the housing and is held by the housing so as to be displaceable in the front-back direction. The electric connector further has a displacement stop member that is disposed behind the tubular member and held to

be displaceable between the stop position and the stop release position; and engaging arms extending between the housing and the tubular member and engaging with the engaging section. The tubular member has a disengaging section that is opposed to the front end portion of the engaging arms and interferes with the engaging arms when the tubular member is moved back, thereby disengaging the engaging arms from the engaging section.

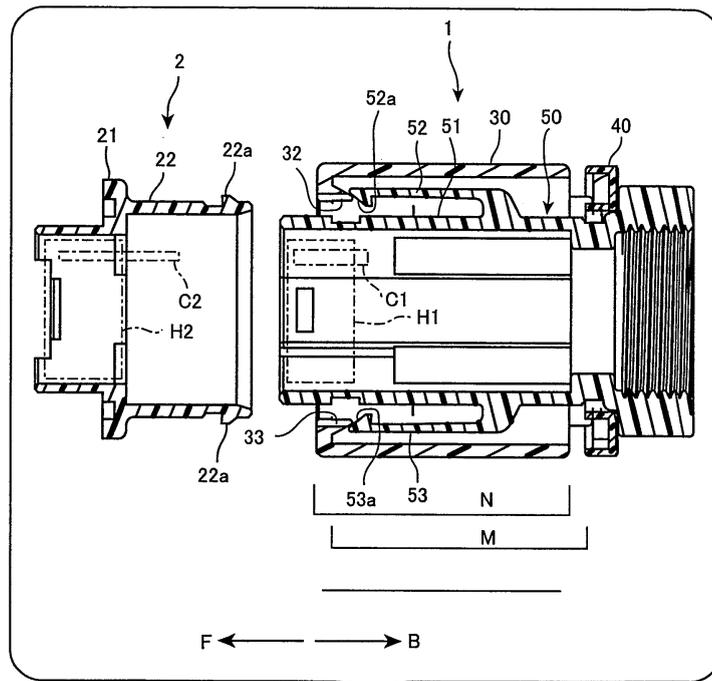


Fig. 2

EP 2 037 543 A1

Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to an electrical connector and a connector assembly that is formed by the electrical connector and a mating connector which the electrical connector is coupled to.

DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART

[0002] There is widely known a kind of an electrical connector that has a function of preventing disconnection of the electrical connector from a mating connector.

[0003] For example, Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2001-214993 describes an electrical connector having a lock ring instead of a nut screwed onto a male screw of a mating connector. The lock ring has plural flexible projecting sections that are pressed in the direction of the center of the lock ring by a coupling sleeve provided at a position corresponding to the outer periphery of the front end of the lock ring, and are engaged with the male screw of the mating connector, when the electrical connector is coupled to the mating connector. When only the coupling sleeve is pulled in the direction of disconnecting the electrical connector, force applied to the projecting sections is released and thereby the electrical connector can be disconnected from the mating connector.

[0004] However, when an operator disconnects the electrical connector, as described in Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2001-214993, from the mating connector, the operator, for example, needs to keep the coupling sleeve in the pulled condition with one hand and move the electrical connector with the other hand in the direction of disconnection. Thus, the operator needs to use both hands to disconnect the electrical connector, which deteriorates working efficiency. In addition, when the above electrical connector and the mating connector are coupled to each other, there may be cases where the electrical connector is disconnected from the mating connector due to vibration or unintentional touching of the coupling sleeve by an object.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] In view of the circumstances described above, it is an object of the present invention to provide an electrical connector and a connector assembly that are capable of being operated with one hand and preventing inadvertent disconnection of the electrical connector.

[0006] An electrical connector according to the present invention for achieving the above object includes:

a housing having a front end portion that is inserted in and pulled from a hood of a mating connector, the hood having an engaging section formed on the external wall thereof;

a tubular member that has an internal diameter allowing the tubular member to surround the hood, and that is held by the housing so as to be displaceable relative to the housing in the front-back direction in which the housing is inserted in and pulled from the hood;

a displacement stop member that is disposed behind the tubular member, and held by the housing so as to be displaceable between a stop position and a stop release position, the stop position stopping the tubular member from moving back, the stop release position releasing the stopping of the moving back of the tubular member; and

an engaging arm that extends in a space between the housing and the tubular member, and has a front end portion that is engaged with the engaging section when the housing is inserted in the hood, wherein the tubular member has an engaging release section that is opposed to the front end portion of the engaging arm and interferes with the engaging arm to disengage the engaging arm from the engaging section, when the tubular member is moved back.

[0007] According to the electrical connector of the present invention, because the engaging arm is engaged with the engaging section formed on the external wall of the hood of the mating connector, it is possible to prevent disconnection of the electrical connector from the mating connector. When the tubular member is moved back, the engagement release section disengages the engaging arms from the engaging section. Alternatively, when the displacement stop member is in the stop position, the tubular member is stopped from moving back. Thus, it is possible to prevent disconnection of the electrical connector from the mating connector even when external force is applied to the tubular member, by moving the displacement stop member to the stop position. In addition, when the displacement stop member is in the stop release position, stopping of moving back of the tubular member is released and the electrical connector can be disconnected from the mating connector only by moving back the tubular member. Accordingly, it is possible to improve operability of disconnecting the electrical connector as well as prevent unintentional disconnection.

[0008] Here, in the electrical connector of the present invention, the displacement stop member may have a cam surface that abuts the tubular member in the stop position, and may be an annular member rotating around the housing between the stop position and the stop release position in which the cam surface is separated from the tubular member.

[0009] As the displacement stop member is a ring-shaped member rotating around the housing, it can be easily operated. In addition, as the position of the displacement stop member relative to the front-back direction does not change before and after the rotation, the chance for the displacement stop member to touch other object is reduced. Further, the direction in which the dis-

placement stop member is rotated is different from the direction in which the tubular member is inserted and pulled from, the chance of inadvertent disconnection of the electrical connector is further reduced.

[0010] In addition, the displacement stop member may be held by the housing so as to be raised and fallen relative to the housing, abuts against the tubular member in a lying state, and is displaceable between the stop position in the lying state and the stop release position in the upright.

[0011] If the displacement stop member is a member that is held so as to be raisable and fallable, it is easy to distinguish the stop position from the stop release position by seeing whether the displacement stop member is in the upright state or the lying state.

[0012] Also, it is preferable that the displacement stop member has a cam surface that abuts the tubular member in the stop position, and is a U-shaped member moving in the direction perpendicular to the direction of inserting the housing, between the stop position and the stop release position in which the cam surface is separated from the tabular member.

[0013] Further, a connector assembly according to another aspect of the present invention is formed by a mating connector and an electrical connector coupled to the mating connector,

wherein the mating connector has a hood provided with an engaging section formed on the external wall thereof, wherein the electrical connector comprises:

a housing having a front end portion that is inserted in and pulled from the hood of the mating connector; a tubular member that has an internal diameter allowing the tubular member to surround the hood, and that is held by the housing so as to be displaceable relative to the housing in the front-back direction in which the housing is inserted in and pulled from the hood;

a displacement stop member that is disposed behind the tubular member, and held by the housing so as to be displaceable between a stop position and a stop release position, the stop position stopping the tubular member from moving back, the stop release position releasing the stopping of the moving back of the tabular member; and

an engaging arm that extends in a space between the housing and the tubular member, and has a front end portion that is engaged with the engaging section when the housing is inserted in the hood, wherein the tubular member has an engaging release section that is opposed to the front end portion of the engaging arm and interferes with the engaging arm to disengage the engaging arm from the engaging section, when the tubular member is moved back.

[0014] As described above, the present invention can realize an electrical connector and a connector assembly that are capable of being operated with one hand and

prevents inadvertent disconnection of the electrical connector.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015]

Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing a plug type connector that is a first embodiment of an electrical connector according to the present invention.

Fig. 2 is a sectional view of the plug type connector shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is an exploded perspective view showing the components of the plug type connector shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of a plug outer case shown in Fig. 1 as viewed from the back thereof.

Fig. 5 is a view of a lock ring shown in Fig. 1 as viewed from the front thereof.

Fig. 6 (A) and Fig. (B) illustrate a state in which cam pins of the plug outer case abut against the lock ring shown in Fig. 5.

Fig. 7 is a view showing a state in which the lock ring is being rotated.

Fig. 8 (A) to Fig.8 (D) are sectional views showing a process in which the plug type connector shown in Fig. 1 is coupled to and disconnected from a receptacle type connector.

Fig. 9 is a perspective view showing a plug type connector that is a second embodiment of the electrical connector according to the present invention.

Fig. 10 is a sectional view showing the plug type connector shown in Fig. 9.

Fig. 11 is a perspective view of the plug type connector shown in Fig. 9 in a state where a stopper of the plug type connector coupled to the receptacle type connector is in the stop release position.

Fig. 12 is a perspective view of the plug type connector shown in Fig. 11 in a state where the stopper is in the stop position.

Fig. 13 is a sectional view of the plug type connector shown in Fig 12.

Fig. 14 is a perspective view showing a plug type connector that is a third embodiment of the electrical connector according to the present invention.

Fig. 15 is a schematic view showing a U-shaped member of the plug type connector shown in Fig. 14.

Fig. 16 is a perspective view of the plug type connector shown in Fig. 14 in a state where a stopper of the plug type connector coupled to the receptacle type connector is in the stop release position.

Fig. 17 is a perspective view of the plug type connector shown in Fig. 16 in a state where the stopper is in the stop position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0016] Embodiments of the present invention will be

described referring to the attached drawings.

[0017] Fig. 1 is a perspective view showing a plug type connector 1 that is a first embodiment of the electrical connector according to the present invention, and Fig. 2 is a sectional view of the plug type connector 1 shown in Fig. 1. Figs. 1 and 2 also show a receptacle connector 2 as a mating connector and indicate a state where the plug type connector 1 is disconnected from the receptacle connector 2. Fig. 3 is an exploded perspective view showing the components of the plug type connector 1 shown in Fig. 1.

[0018] When used, the plug type connector 1 shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 is attached to the end of a cable while the receptacle type connector 2 is attached to a panel or the like. As it is expected that the receptacle type connector 2 is to be attached to a mobile device as well as a stationary device, the plug type connector 1 should be easily coupled to and pulled from the receptacle type connector 2 but is restrained from inadvertent disconnection. The plug type connector 1 and the receptacle type connector 2 are coupled to each other, thereby forming a connector assembly. When coupled, contacts C1 and C2 (see Fig. 2) that are disposed inside the plug type connector 1 and the receptacle type connector 2 respectively are electrically connected to each other. In Fig. 2, only each one of plural contacts C1 and C2 are shown. In other figures, the contacts C1 and C2 and housing cores H1 and H2 to support the contacts are omitted. It should be noted that in this embodiment the direction in which the plug type connector 1 is inserted into the receptacle type connector 2 is referred to as direction F (front) and the direction opposite to F is referred to as direction B (back).

[0019] The plug type connector 1 has a so-called push-pull lock mechanism including a plug inner case 50 that is a housing inserted into and pulled from the receptacle type connector 2; a plug outer case 30 as a tubular member that surrounds the plug inner case 50 and is movable in the directions F and B; and a lock ring 40 as a displacement stop member to stop displacement of the plug outer case 30. The receptacle type connector 2 has a flange 21 to fix this receptacle type connector 2 to a panel of a device and a hood 22 into which the plug inner case 50 of the plug type connector 1 is inserted. In addition, two engaging claws 22a are formed as an engaging section on the external wall of the hood 22. In addition, the housing core H2 (see Fig. 2) that houses plural contacts C2 is disposed in the receptacle type connector 2.

[0020] The plug inner case 50 of the plug type connector 1 is approximately in tubular form and has the housing core H1 (see Fig. 2) formed inside thereof that accommodates the contacts C1. As the plug inner case 50 has the housing core H1 attached thereto, it functions as a housing accommodating contacts C1. The plug inner case 50 has a front end 51, which is inserted into the hood 22 of the receptacle type connector 2, formed at the front in the direction F, that is, the direction in which the plug inner case 50 is inserted into the hood 22. The

housing core H1 (see Fig. 2) is disposed at the inside of the front end 51 of the plug inner case 50.

[0021] The plug inner case 50 is provided with engaging arms 52,53 (see Figs. 2, 3) that extend in the direction F along the external wall of the plug inner case 50. The engaging arms 52, 53 extend between the plug inner case 50 and the plug outer case 30, and have protrusions formed on the front end portions 52a, 53a thereof. When the plug type connector 1 and receptacle type connector 2 are coupled to each other, the front end portions 52a and 53a of the engaging arms 52 and 53 are respectively engaged with the engaging claws 22a of the hood 22, which prevents the plug type connector 1 from disconnection.

[0022] The plug outer case 30 is approximately in a tubular form and has an inside diameter long enough to allow the plug outer case 30 to surround the hood 22 of the receptacle type connector 2, and is placed so as to surround the plug inner case 50. When the plug type connector 1 and the receptacle type connector 2 are coupled to each other, the hood 22 of receptacle type connector 2 is interposed between the plug inner case 50 and the plug outer case 30. The plug outer case 30 is held by the plug inner case 50 such that plug outer case 30 can be displaced between a neutral position N and a release position M that is further back in the direction B than the neutral position N as shown in Fig. 2. On the front end of the plug outer case 30, two engagement release portions 32,32 are formed that are bent inward to project toward the direction B. The engagement release portions 32,32 are placed so as to be opposed to the front end portions 52a, 53a of the engaging arms 52, 53 that are directed to the direction F. When the plug outer case 30 is caused to slide in the direction B to the release position M by operation, the engagement release portions 32, 33 interfere with the engaging arms 52,53. When the engagement release portions 32, 33 interfere with the engaging arms 52,53 while the plug type connector 1 and receptacle type connector 2 are mated, the engaging arms 52, 53 are disengaged from the engaging claws 22a. In addition, when the plug outer case 30 moves toward the direction B, inclined surfaces respectively formed on the engagement release portions 32, 33 press the engaging arms 52,53 in the direction in which the engaging arms 52,53 are separated from each other. Thus, the plug outer case 30 is pushed toward the direction F by elastic force of the engaging arms 52,53, and returned to the neutral position N without any operation. The lock ring 40 restricts the displacement of the plug outer case 30 toward the direction B.

[0023] Fig. 4 is a perspective view of the plug outer case 30 shown in Fig. 1 as viewed from the back thereof.

[0024] As shown in Fig. 4, four cam pins 35,36,37,38 that project toward direction B are provided on the rear end of the plug outer case 30. The four cam pins 35-38 are caused to abut against the lock ring 40.

[0025] Fig. 5 is a view of the lock ring 40 shown in Fig. 1 as viewed from the front thereof. In Fig. 5, a schematic

sectional view of a groove 55 formed in the plug inner case 50 is also shown with the lock ring 40.

[0026] The annular lock ring 40 that rotates around the plug inner case 50 is formed by fitting two ring members 41a, 41b in semicircle arc form, into the groove 55 formed in the plug inner case 50 (see Fig. 3). The lock ring 40 has cutouts 42a, 42b that regulate the rotation angle of the lock ring 40, click arms 43a, 43b to cause a feeling of click during rotation, cam surface 45,46,47,48 corresponding to the cam pins 35,36,37,38 of the plug outer case 30. The cam surface 45 is further formed by a front surface 45a, a back surface 45c, and an inclined surface 45b that is interposed between the front surface 45a and the back surface 45c. Similarly, the remaining cam surfaces 46 - 48 are formed by three surfaces similarly to the cam surface 45.

[0027] As shown in Fig. 5, protrusions 56a, 56b corresponding to the cutouts 42a, 42b, and recesses 57a, 57b corresponding to the click arms 43a, 43b are formed on the groove 55 (see Fig. 3) of the plug inner case 50. The lock ring 40 rotates about the plug inner case 50 as an axis that extends in the front - back direction. The rotation angle of lock ring 40 is regulated within about 30 degrees by the cutouts 42a, 42b and the protrusion 56a, 56b. In addition, fitting of the click arms 43a, 43b into the recesses 57a, 57b generates a feeling of click, and positions the lock ring 40.

[0028] Figs. 6 (A) and 6 (B) illustrate a state in which the cam pins 35-38 of the plug outer case 30 abut against the lock ring 40 shown in Fig. 5. Fig. 6 (A) shows the stop position of the lock ring 40, while Fig. 6 (B) shows the stop release position. Fig. 7 shows a state in which the lock ring 40 is being rotated.

[0029] The lock ring 40 is held by the plug inner case 50 so as to be displaceable between the stop position shown in Fig. 6 (A) and the stop release position shown in Fig. 6 (B). In the stop position shown in Fig. 6 (A), the cam pin 35 is caused to abut against the front surface 45a of the cam surface 45. Similarly, the remaining cam pins 36-38 are caused to abut against corresponding front surfaces of the cam surfaces 46-48. In this state, the plug outer case 30 is in the neutral position N (see Fig. 2), the cam pins 36-38 of the plug outer case 30 are abutted against the cam surfaces 46-48, and displacement of the cam outer case 30 toward the direction B is stopped.

[0030] When the lock ring 40 is turned to the direction indicated by arrow R of Fig. 7 by the operation of an operator, the lock ring 40 reaches the stop release position shown in Fig. 6 (B). In the stop release position shown in Fig. 6 (B), the cam pin 35 is opposed to the back surface 45c of the cam surface 45. Similarly, the remaining cam pins 36-38 are respectively opposed to corresponding surfaces of the cam surfaces 46-48. In the stop release position, the cam surfaces 45-48 are separated from the cam pins 35-38. Thus, the plug outer case 30 is released from the stop position that prevents displacement of the plug outer case 30 toward direction B. Accordingly, the

plug outer case 30 can move by the operation of the operator from the neutral position N to the release position M (see Fig. 2) where the cam pins 35-38 of the plug outer case 30 abut the cam surfaces 45-48 again (the back surface 45c in this case).

[0031] Fig.8 (A) to Fig.8 (D) are sectional views showing a process of connection and disconnection of the plug type connector 1 and the receptacle type connector 2 shown in Fig. 1. Fig.8 (A) to Fig.8 (D) sequentially show the process in which the plug type connector 1 is coupled to and disconnected from the receptacle type connector 2.

[0032] When the plug type connector 1 and receptacle type connector 2 shown in Fig. 8 (A) are to be coupled to each other, the hood 22 of the receptacle type connector 2 enters gap in a tubular form between the plug inner case 50 as an internal tube and the plug outer case 30 as an outer tube. Incidentally, the lock ring 40 may be in either of the stop position (Fig. 6(A)) and the stop release position (Fig. 6(B)). When the plug type connector 1 and receptacle type connector 2 are to be coupled to each other, the plug outer case 30 is in the neutral position N (see Fig. 2), being pushed forward in the direction F, irrespective of whether the lock ring 40 is in the stop position or stop release position.

[0033] As shown in Fig. 8 (B), when the front end 51 of the plug inner case 50 is inserted into the hood 22, the front end portions 52a, 53a of the engaging arms 52, 53, respectively go over the engaging claws 22a of the hood 22, and, as shown in Fig. 8 (C), are engaged with the engaging claws 22a. Engagement of the engaging arms 52, 53 with the engaging claws 22a prevents the plug type connector 1 from being disconnected from the receptacle type connector 2. Fig. 8 (C) shows a finished connector assembly A1 in which the plug type connector 1 is coupled to the receptacle type connector 2.

[0034] If the lock ring 40 is in the stop position (see Fig. 6(A) while the plug type connector 1 is mated with the receptacle type connector 2 as shown in Fig. 8 (C), disconnection of the plug type connector 1 is surely prevented because the plug outer case 30 is restrained from moving to the release position M (see Fig. 2). When the lock ring 40 is rotated by operation to shift to the stop release position (see Fig. 6 (B)), the plug outer case 30 becomes displaceable toward the direction B. When the plug outer case 30 is moved toward the direction B to the release position M as shown in Fig. 8 (D) by operation, the engagement release portions 32, 33 interfere with the engaging arms 52,53, thereby disengaging the engaging arms 52,53 from the engaging claws 22a. Pulling the plug outer case 30 in the state shown in Fig. 8 (D) further toward the direction B by operation disconnects the plug type connector 1 from the receptacle type connector 2.

[0035] Next, a second embodiment of the present invention will be described. In the descriptions of the second embodiment, the same elements as those in the first embodiment are designated as identical reference sym-

bols and only the feature different from the first embodiment will be described.

[0036] Fig. 9 is a perspective view showing a plug type connector 201 that is the second embodiment of the electrical connector according to the present invention and Fig. 10 is a sectional view of the plug type connector 201 shown in Fig. 9.

[0037] A connector assembly A2 (see Figs. 11, 12) is formed by coupling the plug type connector 201 to a receptacle type connector 202 shown in Fig. 9 and Fig. 10.

[0038] The plug type connector 201 is of push-pull type with locking function and includes a plug inner case 250 as a housing to be inserted into the receptacle type connector 202, a plug outer case 230 formed outside the plug inner case 250 so as to be movable in the directions F and B, and a stopper 240 serving as a member to stop movement of the plug outer case 230. The receptacle type connector 202 has a hood 222 which the plug inner case 250 is inserted in. Engaging dents 222a as an engaging section are formed in the outer wall of the hood 222.

[0039] The plug inner case 250 of the plug type connector 201 is approximately in tubular form, a front end 251 of which is inserted into the hood 222 of the receptacle type connector 202. The plug inner case 250 has two engaging arms 252, 253 that extend in the direction F along the outer surface of the front end 251. On each of front end portions 252a, 253a of the engaging arms 252, 253, a hook is formed that fits in each of the engaging dents 222a of the hood 222 when the plug type connector 201 and receptacle type connector 202 are coupled to each other. Fitting the engaging arms 252, 253 in the engaging dents 222a prevents the plug type connector 201 from disconnection.

[0040] The plug outer case 230 is held such that it is displaceable relative to the plug inner case 250 in the directions F and B. On the front end of the plug outer case 230, two engagement release portions 232, 233 (see Fig. 13) are formed that are bent inward to project in the direction B. The engagement release portions 232, 233 are placed so as to contact the front end portions 252a, 253a of the engaging arms 252, 253.

[0041] The stopper 240 disposed behind the plug outer case 230 stops the plug outer case 230 from moving in the direction B. The stopper 240 is held by the plug inner case 250 by means of a hinging mechanism, and displaceable between the stop position in the lying state and the stop release position in the upright state. The stopper 240 shown in Fig. 9 is in the stop release position in the state of being erected relative to the plug inner case 250, while the stopper 240 shown in Fig. 10 is in the stop position in the lying state. When the stopper 240 is in the stop position, the stopper 240 abuts the plug outer case 230 and thereby prevents the plug outer case 230 from moving in the direction B.

[0042] Fig. 11 is a perspective view of the plug type connector 201 shown in Fig. 9 in a state where the stopper 240 of the plug type connector 201 coupled to the recep-

tacle type connector 202 is in the stop release position. Fig. 12 is a perspective view of the plug type connector 201 shown in Fig. 11 in a state where the stopper 240 is in the stop position. Fig. 13 is a sectional view of the plug type connector 201 shown in Fig. 12.

[0043] As shown in Fig. 11-Fig. 13, when the plug type connector 201 is coupled to the receptacle type connector 202, the front end 251 of the plug inner case 250 is inserted into the hood 222, and the front end portions 252a, 253a of the engaging arms 252, 253 are fitted in the engaging dents 222a of the hood 222, which prevents the plug type connector 201 from being disconnected. Fig. 11 and Fig. 12 show a finished connector assembly A2 in which the plug type connector 201 is coupled to the receptacle type connector 202.

[0044] As shown in Fig. 11 and Fig. 12, when the stopper 240 is in the stop position in the lying state, the plug outer case 230 is stopped from moving in the direction B even with external force applied thereto, which prevents the plug outer case 230 from moving to the release position M (see Fig. 10). Thus, it is possible to securely prevent the plug type connector 201 from being disconnected from the receptacle type connector 202. When the stopper 240 is erected by operation to shift to the stop release position (see Fig. 11), the plug outer case 230 becomes displaceable in the direction B. When the plug outer case 230 moves in the direction B to the release position M (see Fig. 10) by operation, the engagement release portions 232, 233 interfere with the engaging arms 252, 253, thereby disengaging the engaging arms 252, 253 from the engaging dents 222a. When the plug outer case 230 is further pulled in the direction B by operation, the plug type connector 201 is disconnected from the receptacle type connector 202.

[0045] Next, a third embodiment of the present invention will be described. In the descriptions of the third embodiment, the same elements as those in the first and second embodiments are designated as identical reference symbols and only the feature different from the first and second embodiments will be described.

[0046] Fig. 14 is a perspective view of a plug type connector 301 that is the third embodiment of the electrical connector according to the present invention.

[0047] The plug type connector 301 and a receptacle type connector 202 shown in Fig. 14 are coupled to each other, thereby forming a finished connector assembly.

[0048] The plug type connector 301 has a plug inner case 350 as a housing to be inserted into the receptacle type connector 202; a plug outer case 330 as a tubular member that is disposed outside the plug inner case 350 and is movable in the directions F and B; a U-shaped member 340 serving as a displacement stop member to stop displacement of the plug outer case 330.

[0049] The inner case 350 of the plug type connector 301 is different from the plug inner case 250 of the second embodiment only in that the rear end is in the shape of hexagon. It should be noted that various kinds of shapes may be applied to the plug inner case. The plug outer

case 330 is different from the plug outer case 230 of the second embodiment only in that there is formed a cam follower 339 having an inclined surface on the rear end thereof.

[0050] Fig. 15 is a schematic view showing the U-shaped member 340 of the plug type connector 301 shown in Fig. 14.

[0051] As shown in Fig. 15, the U-shaped member 340 is shaped like U and has a pair of arms 340a between which the plug inner case 350 is sandwiched. The U-shaped member 340 moves in the direction perpendicular to the directions F and B in which the plug type connector 301 is inserted in and disconnected from the receptacle type connector 202. The pair of arms 340a respectively have protrusions 340b that protrude in the direction in which the protrusions 340b are opposed to each other. When the U-shaped member 340 moves downward, the protrusions 340b slide over the plug inner case 350. In addition, as shown in Fig. 14, the U-shaped member 340 has a cam surface 349 that abuts the cam follower 339 of the plug outer case 330.

[0052] Fig. 16 is a perspective view of the plug type connector 301 shown in Fig. 14 in a state where the stopper 340 of the plug type connector 301 coupled to the receptacle type connector 202 is in the stop release position. Fig. 17 is a perspective view of the plug type connector 301 shown in Fig. 16 in a state where the stopper 340 is in the stop position.

[0053] As shown in Fig. 16 and Fig. 17, when the plug type connector 301 is coupled to the receptacle type connector 202, the plug type connector 301 is restrained from disconnection. Fig. 16 and Fig. 17 show a finished connector assembly A3 in which the plug type connector 201 is coupled to the receptacle type connector 202.

[0054] As shown in Fig. 17, when the U-shaped member 340 is in the stop position where the U-shaped member 340 is flush with the plug outer case 330, the cam follower 339 of the plug outer case 330 is caused to abut against the cam surface 349 of the U-shaped member 340. In this state, the plug outer case 330 is stopped from moving to the release position, even with external force applied thereto, which securely prevents disconnection of the plug type connector 301. When the U-shaped member 340 is pulled to shift to the stop release position as shown in Fig. 16, the cam surface 349 of the U-shaped member 340 is separated from the cam follower 339, thereby making the plug outer case 330 displaceable in the direction B. Thus, the engaging arms 252, 253 (see Fig. 13) are disengaged from the engaging dents 222a. When the plug outer case 330 is further pulled in the direction B by operation, the plug type connector 301 is disconnected from the receptacle type connector 202.

[0055] Incidentally, the plug type connector in the embodiments has been described as an example of the electrical connector of the present invention. However, the electrical connector of the present invention is not limited to the plug type connector and, for example, may be a receptacle type connector.

Claims

1. An electrical connector comprising:
 - a housing having a front end portion that is inserted in and pulled from a hood of a mating connector, the hood having an engaging section formed on the external wall thereof;
 - a tubular member that has an internal diameter allowing the tubular member to surround the hood, and that is held by the housing so as to be displaceable relative to the housing in the front-back direction in which the housing is inserted in and pulled from the hood;
 - a displacement stop member that is disposed behind the tubular member, and held by the housing so as to be displaceable between a stop position and a stop release position, the stop position stopping the tubular member from moving back, the stop release position releasing the stopping of the moving back of the tubular member; and
 - an engaging arm that extends in a space between the housing and the tubular member, and has a front end portion that is engaged with the engaging section when the housing is inserted in the hood, wherein the tubular member has an engaging release section that is opposed to the front end portion of the engaging arm and interferes with the engaging arm to disengage the engaging arm from the engaging section, when the tubular member is moved back.
2. The electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the displacement stop member has a cam surface that abuts the tubular member in the stop position, and is an annular member rotating around the housing between the stop position and the stop release position in which the cam surface is separated from the tubular member.
3. The electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the displacement stop member is held by the housing so as to be raised and lying relative to the housing, abuts against the tubular member in a lying state, and is displaceable between the stop position in the lying state and the stop release position in a raised state.
4. The electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the displacement stop member has a cam surface that abuts the tubular member in the stop position, and is a U-shaped member moving in the direction perpendicular to the direction of inserting the housing, between the stop position and the stop release position in which the cam surface is separated from the tubular member.

5. A connector assembly that is formed by a mating connector and an electrical connector coupled to the mating connector, wherein the mating connector has a hood provided with an engaging section formed on the external wall thereof, wherein the electrical connector comprises:

- a housing having a front end portion that is inserted in and pulled from the hood of the mating connector;
- a tubular member that has an internal diameter allowing the tubular member to surround the hood, and that is held by the housing so as to be displaceable relative to the housing in the front-back direction in which the housing is inserted in and pulled from the hood;
- a displacement stop member that is disposed behind the tubular member, and held by the housing so as to be displaceable between a stop position and a stop release position, the stop position stopping the tubular member from moving back, the stop release position releasing the stopping of the moving back of the tubular member; and
- an engaging arm that extends in a space between the housing and the tubular member, and has a front end portion that is engaged with the engaging section when the housing is inserted in the hood, wherein the tubular member has an engaging release section that is opposed to the front end portion of the engaging arm and interferes with the engaging arm to disengage the engaging arm from the engaging section, when the tubular member is moved back.

5

10

15

20

25

30

35

40

45

50

55

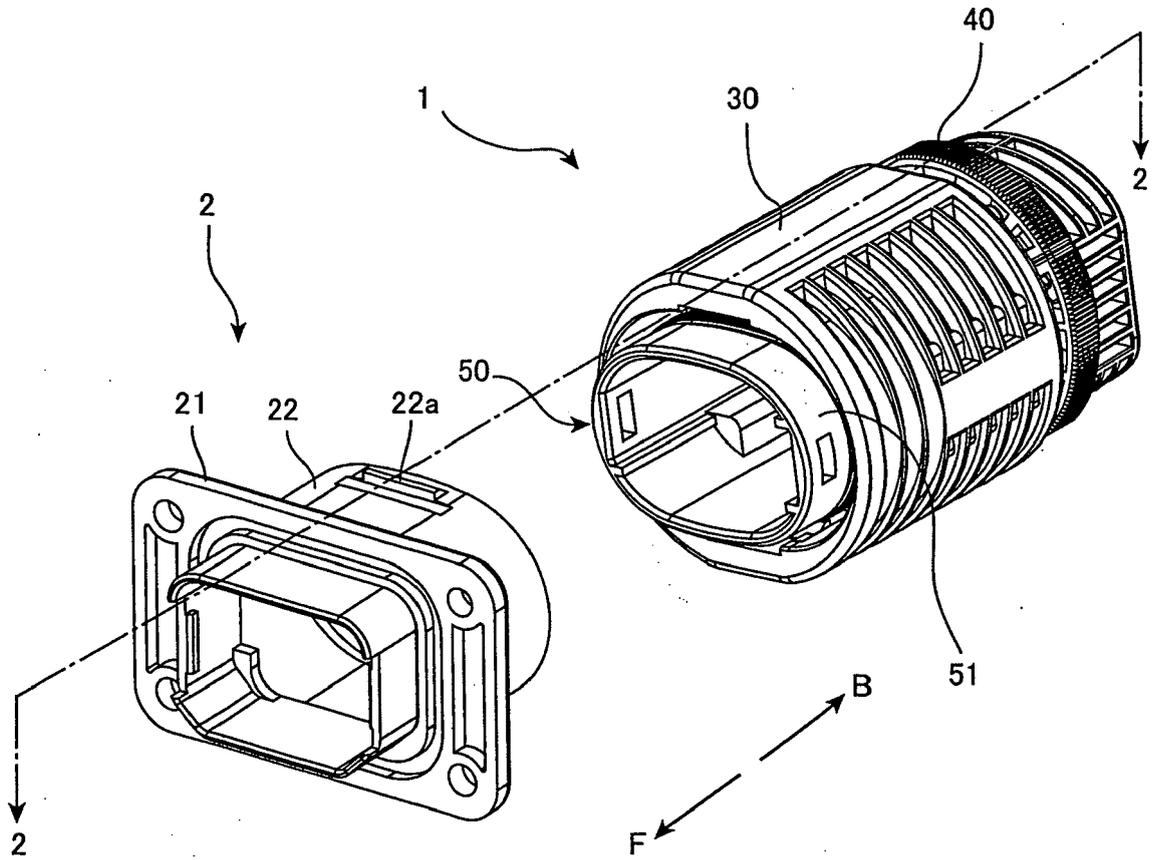


Fig. 1

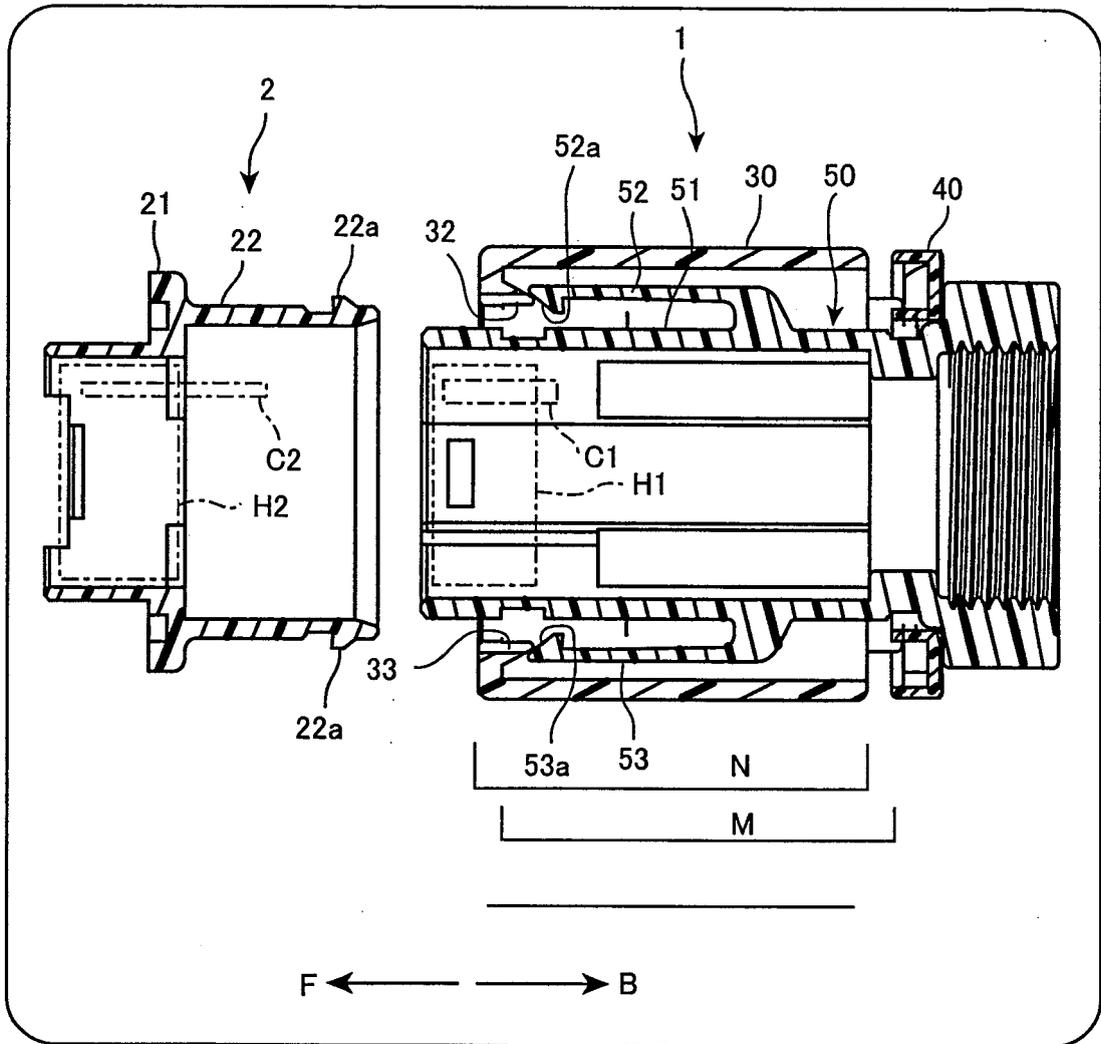


Fig. 2

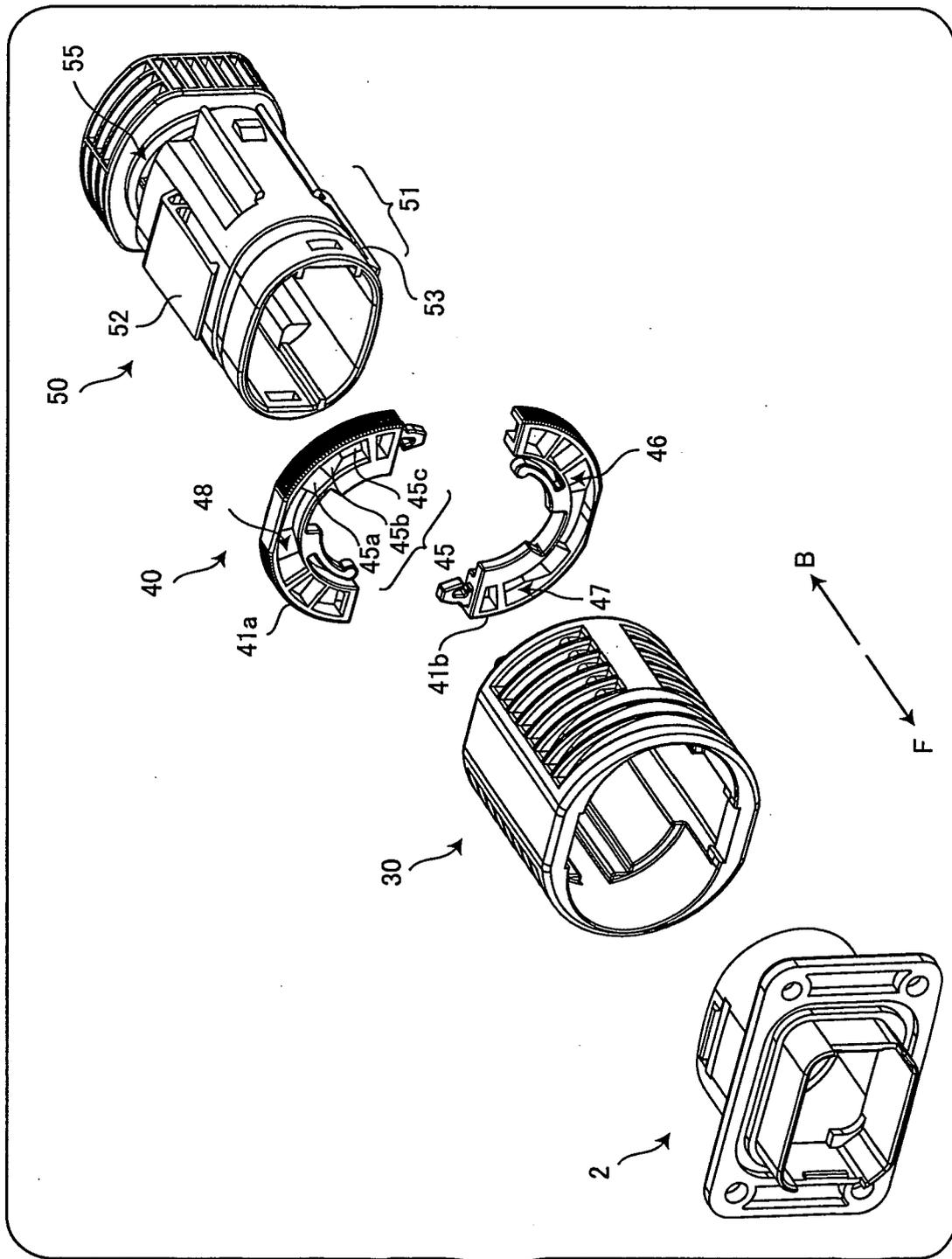


Fig. 3

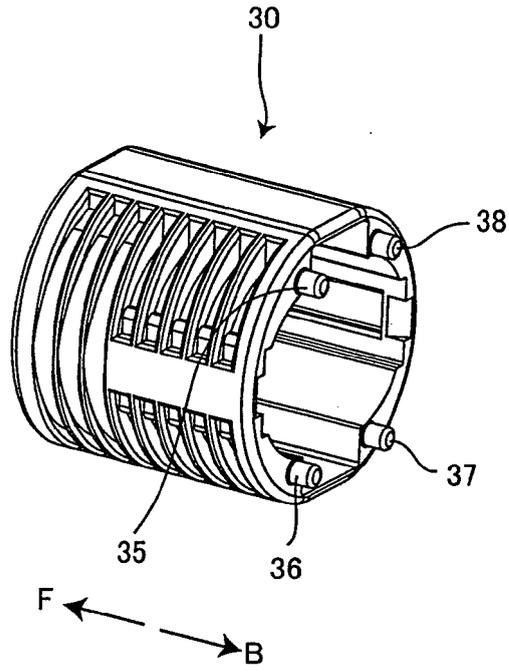


Fig. 4

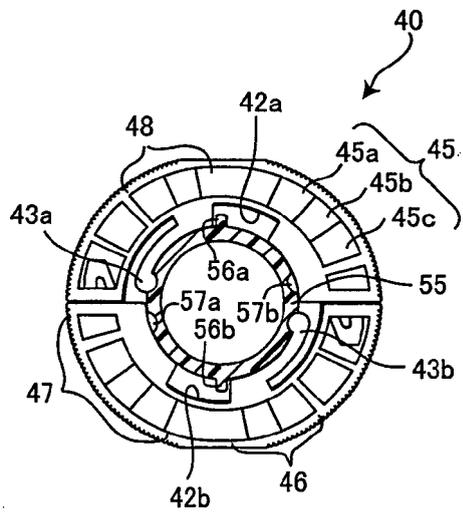


Fig. 5

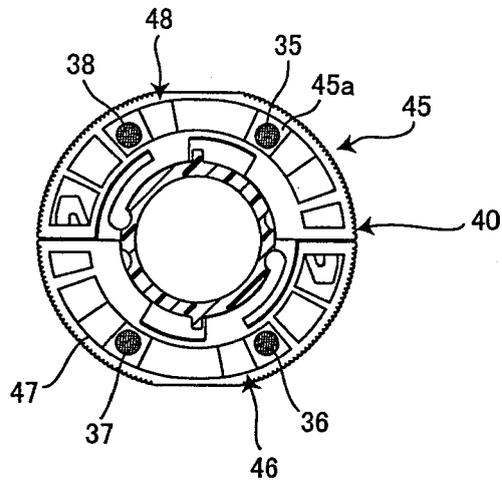


Fig. 6 (A)

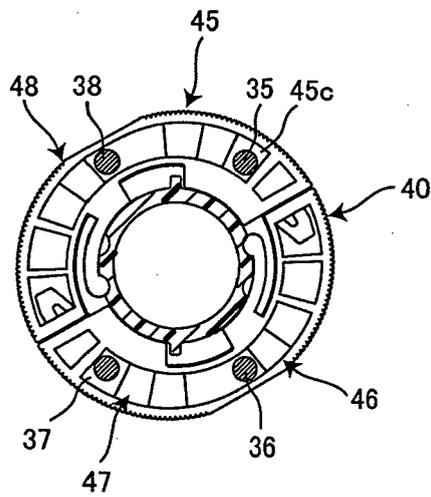


Fig. 6 (B)

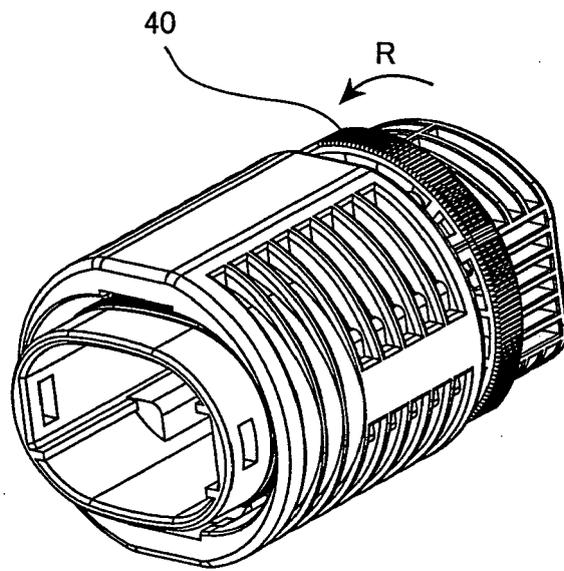


Fig. 7

Fig. 8 (A)

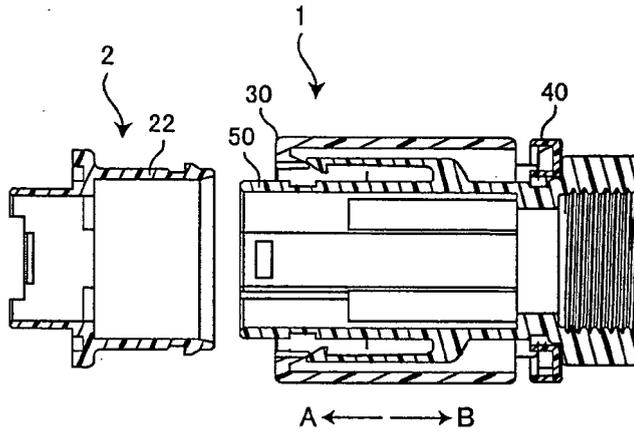


Fig. 8 (B)

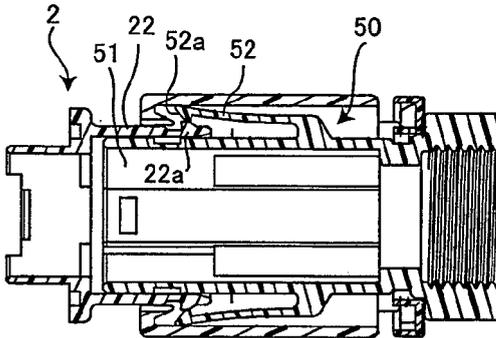


Fig. 8 (C)

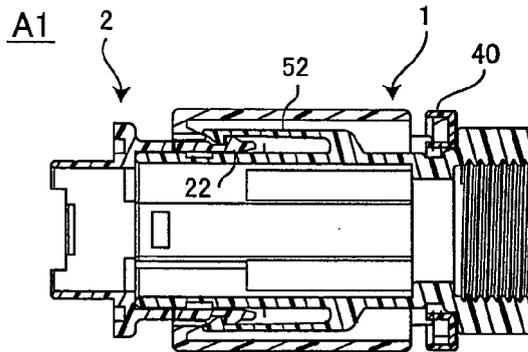
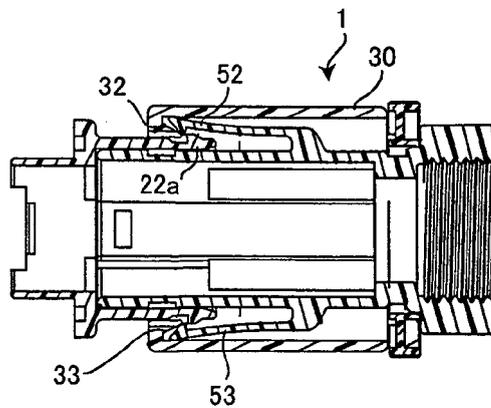


Fig. 8 (D)



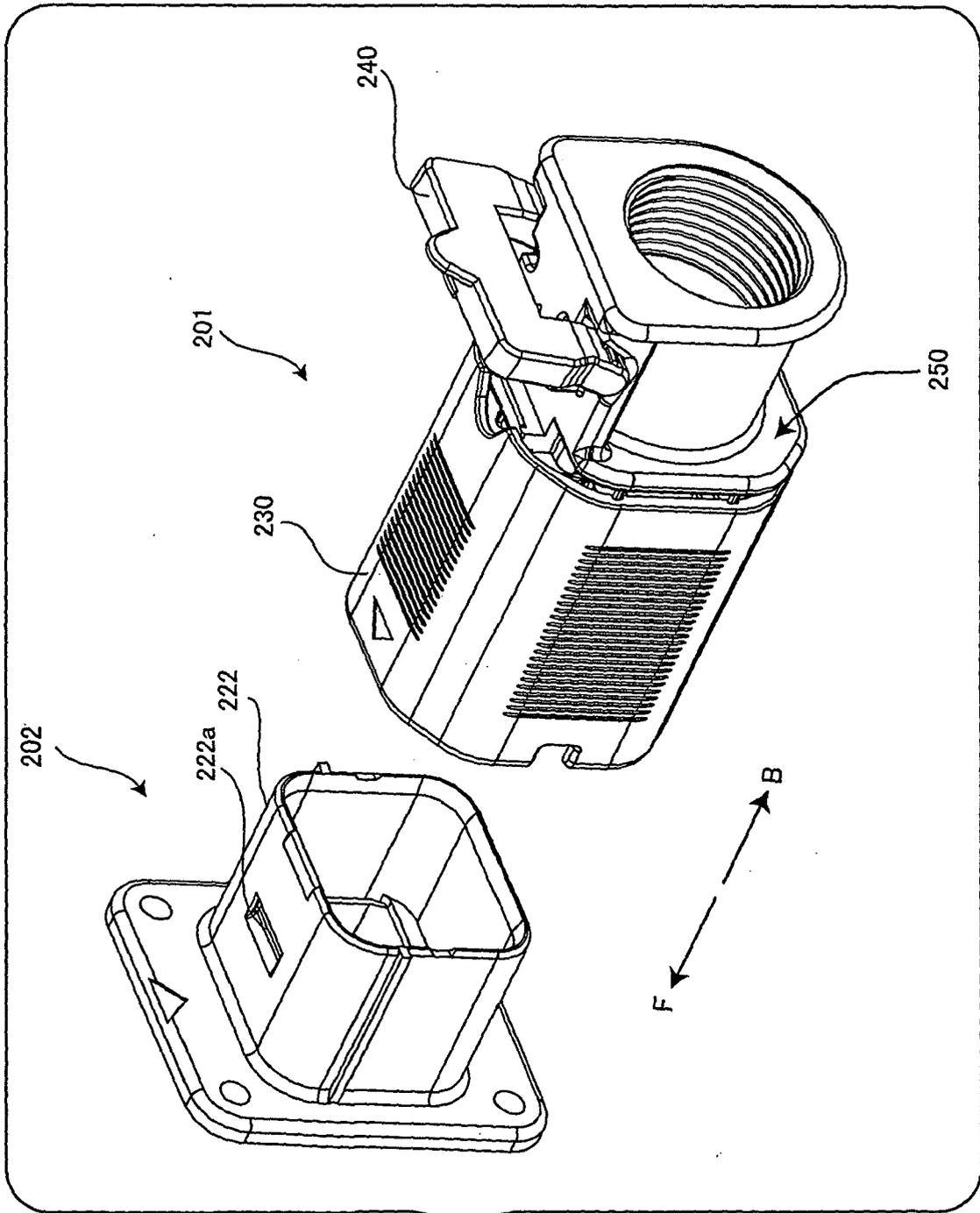


Fig. 9

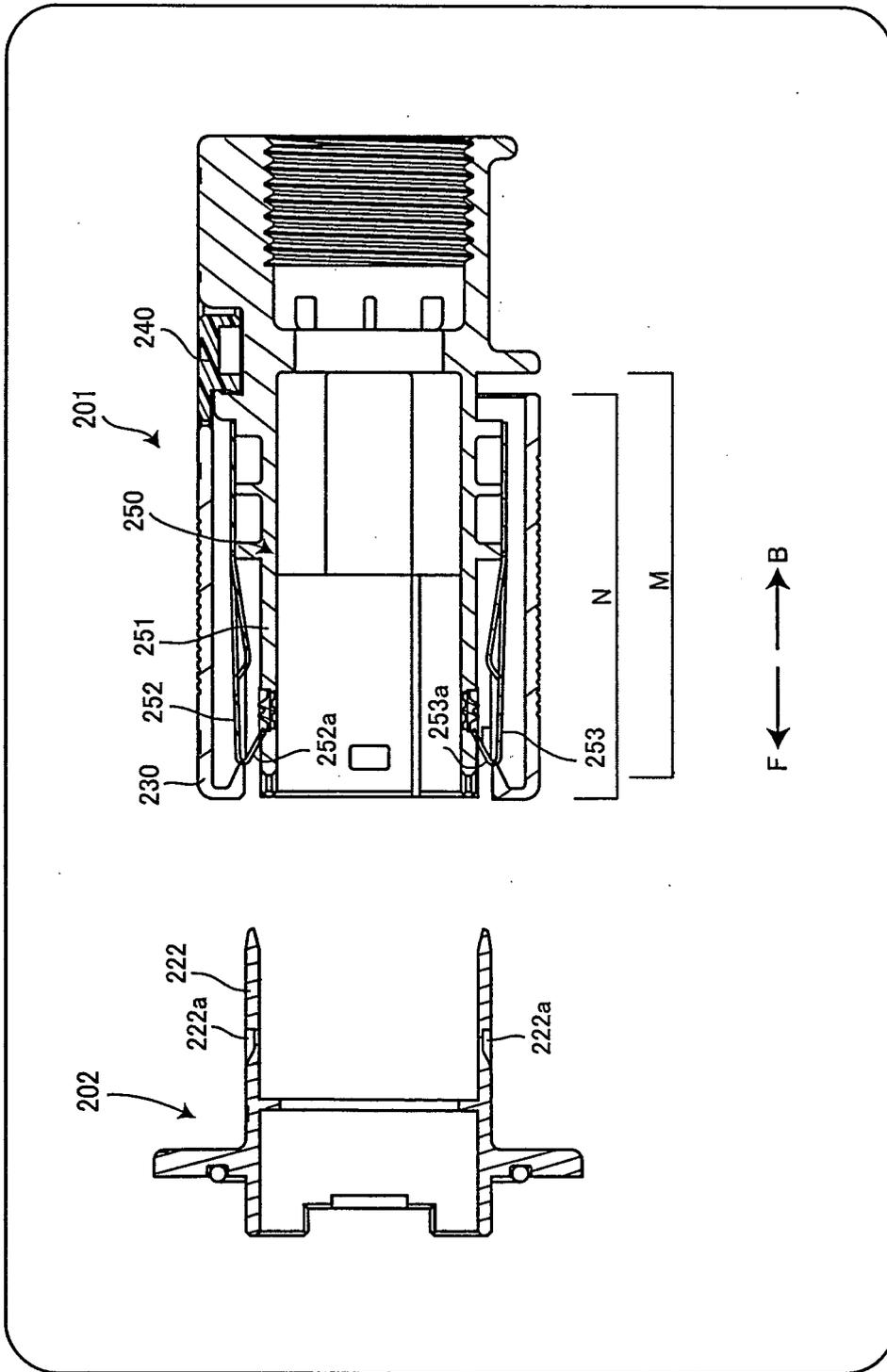


Fig. 10

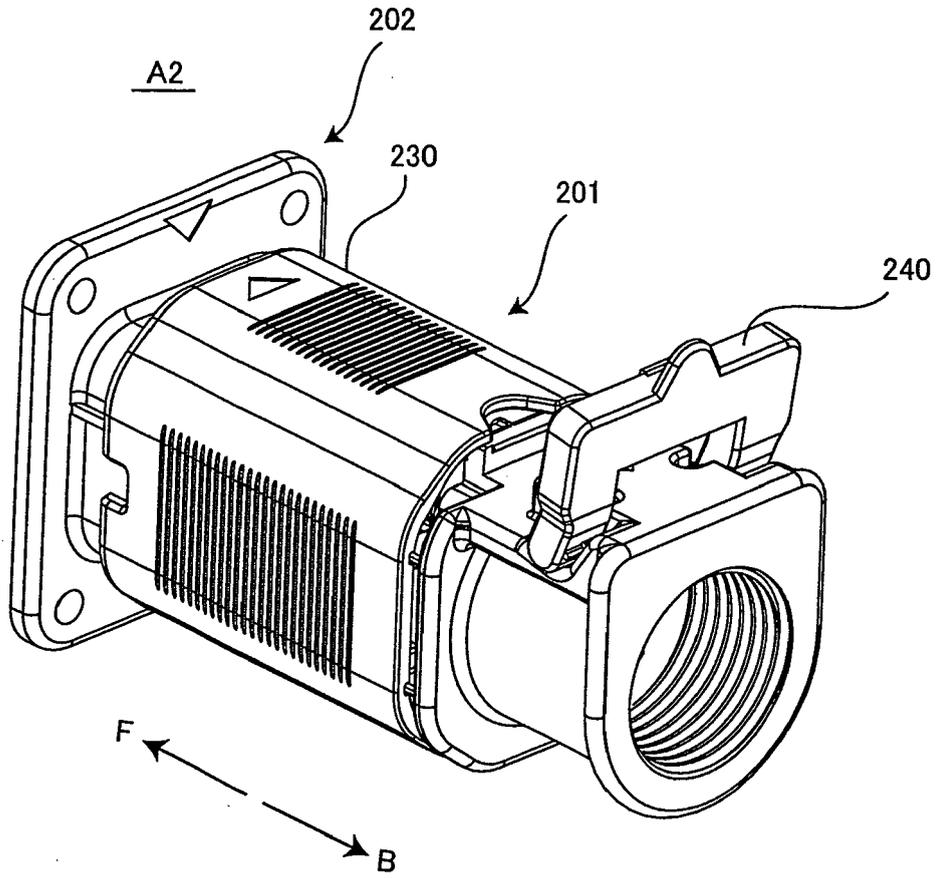


Fig. 11

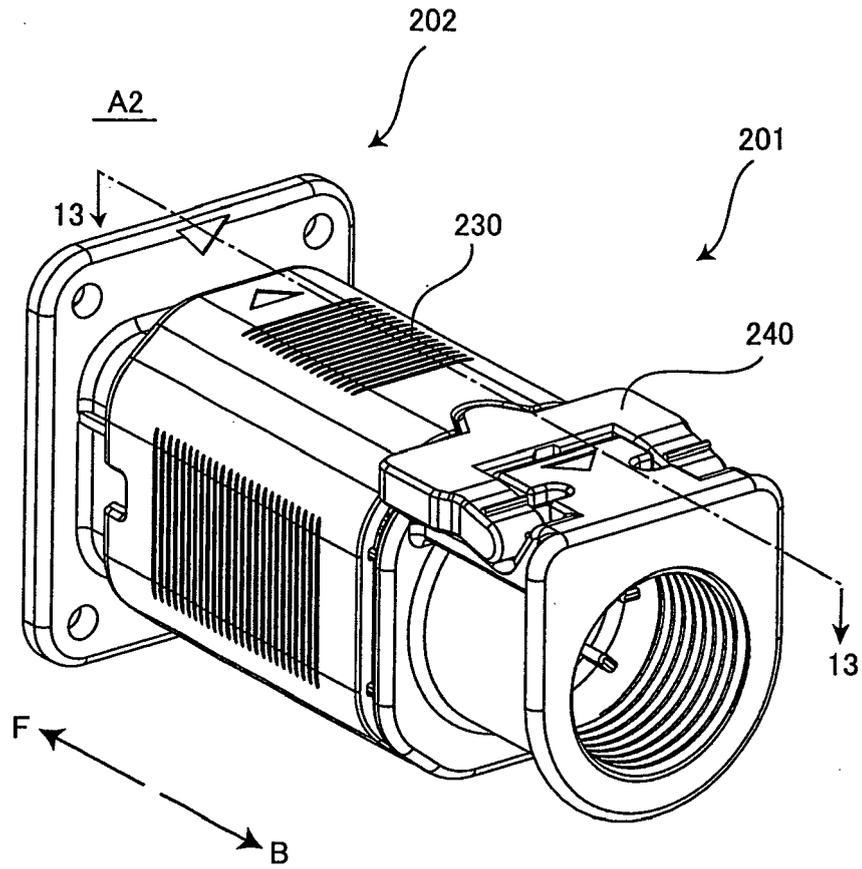


Fig. 12

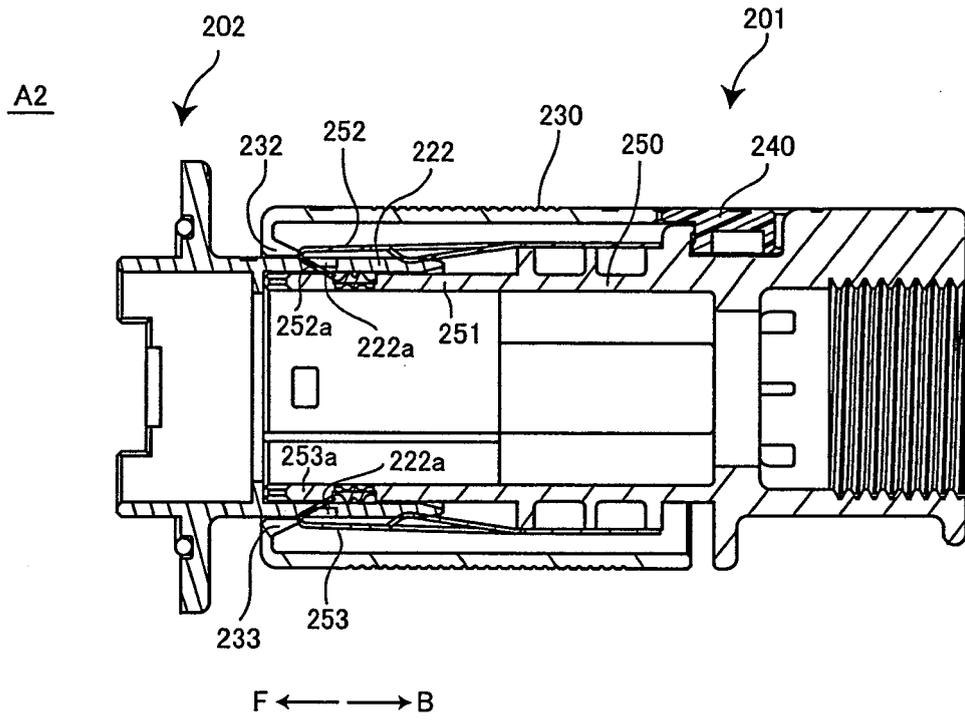


Fig. 13

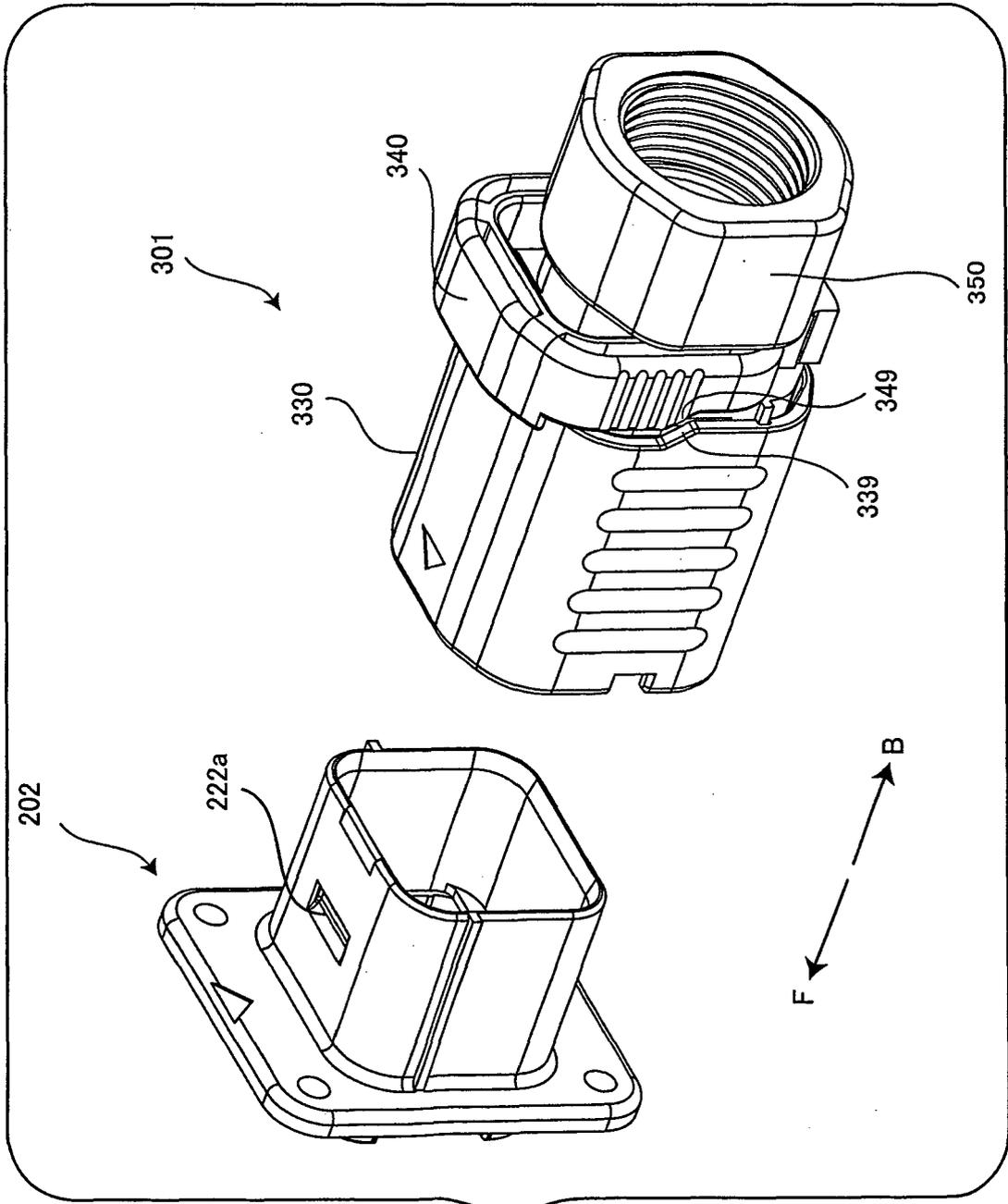


Fig. 14

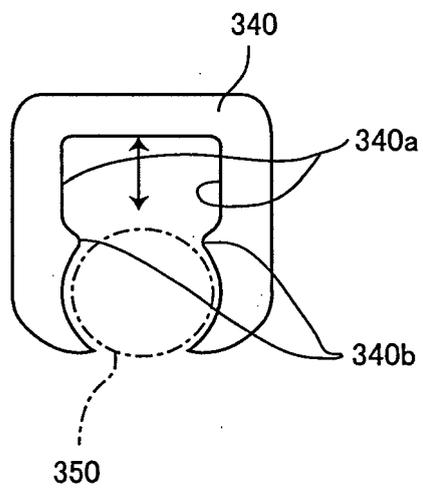


Fig. 15

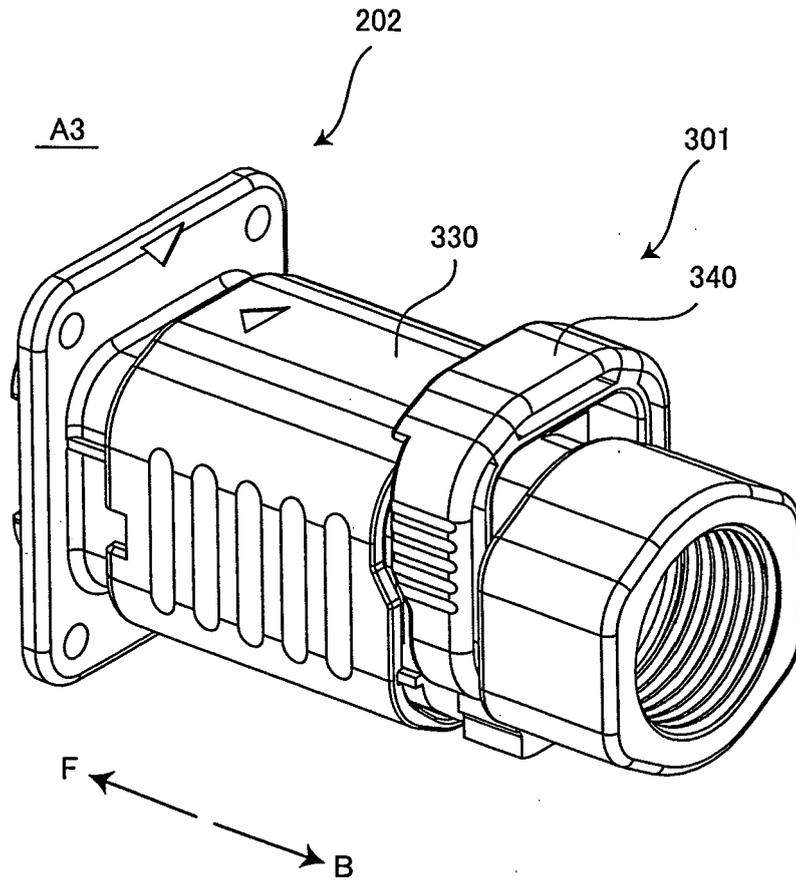


Fig. 16

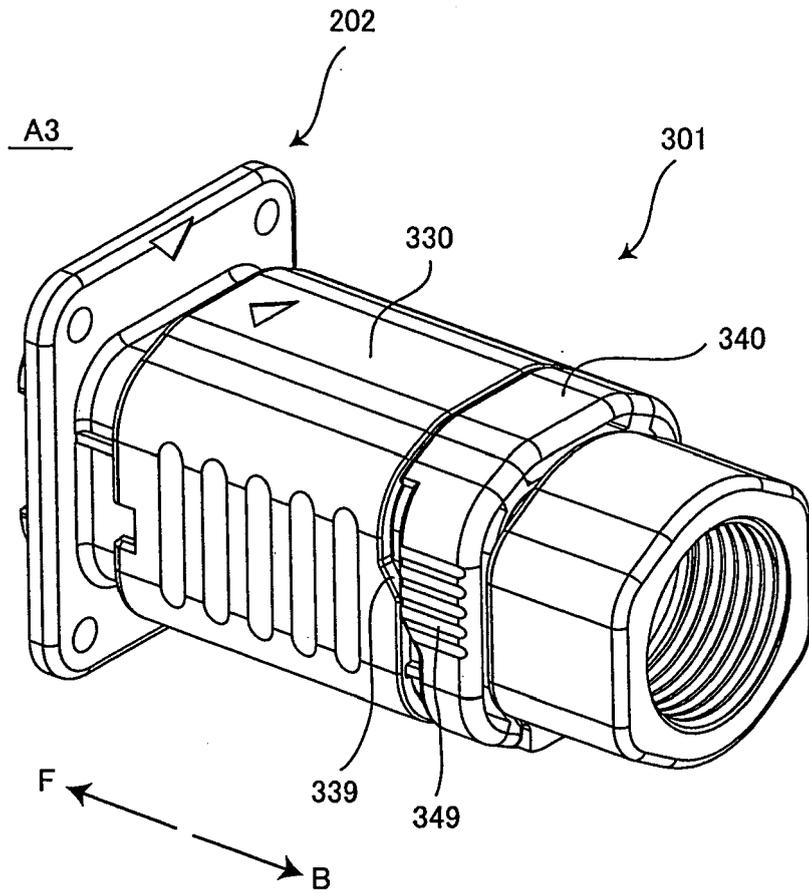


Fig. 17



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 08 01 2246

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
A	EP 1 282 202 A (RADIALL SA [FR]; HUBER & SUHNER AG [CH]) 5 February 2003 (2003-02-05) * abstract; figure 10 * * paragraph [0056] - paragraph [0065] * -----	1,5	INV. H01R13/639 H01R13/627
A	FR 2 003 198 A (INT STANDARD ELECTRIC CORP) 7 November 1969 (1969-11-07) * abstract; figures 1-6 * * column 2, line 39 - column 5, line 38 * -----	1,2,5	
A	US 2007/105417 A1 (CAMELIO DAVID J [US]) 10 May 2007 (2007-05-10) * abstract; figures 1-4 * * paragraph [0016] - paragraph [0028] * -----	1,5	
A	EP 0 715 372 A (MARECHAL SEPM [FR]) 5 June 1996 (1996-06-05) * abstract; figures * * column 3, line 11 - column 5, line 20 * -----	1,5	
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)
			H01R
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
Munich		6 February 2009	Serrano Funcia, J
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	

3
EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04/C01)

ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.

EP 08 01 2246

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
The European Patent Office is in no way liable for these particulars which are merely given for the purpose of information.

06-02-2009

Patent document cited in search report		Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
EP 1282202	A	05-02-2003	DE 60223464 T2	18-09-2008
			FR 2828343 A1	07-02-2003
			US 2003027435 A1	06-02-2003

FR 2003198	A	07-11-1969	BE 731289 A	10-10-1969
			DE 1910073 A1	25-09-1969
			GB 1190357 A	06-05-1970
			JP 51007834 B	11-03-1976
			US 3517371 A	23-06-1970

US 2007105417	A1	10-05-2007	US 2008096405 A1	24-04-2008

EP 0715372	A	05-06-1996	AU 702571 B2	25-02-1999
			AU 3916095 A	13-06-1996
			CA 2161931 A1	03-06-1996
			DE 69504282 D1	01-10-1998
			DE 69504282 T2	04-02-1999
			ES 2120150 T3	16-10-1998
			FR 2727799 A1	07-06-1996
			JP 8222307 A	30-08-1996
			US 5697798 A	16-12-1997

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

This list of references cited by the applicant is for the reader's convenience only. It does not form part of the European patent document. Even though great care has been taken in compiling the references, errors or omissions cannot be excluded and the EPO disclaims all liability in this regard.

Patent documents cited in the description

- JP 2001214993 A [0003] [0004]